NEWS ANALYSIS 1-0855 MAY 28, 1976
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MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS

ANNCR: VOA NEWS ANALYST RONALD J. DUNLAVEY DISCUSSES TWO RECENT DEVELOPMENTS RELATING TO THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST:

VOICE:

A LITTLE OVER A WEEK FROM NOW---JUNE FIFTH--- IS THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI WAR OF NINETEEN SIXTY-SEVEN. THAT WAR LASTED ONLY A FEW DAYS, BUT IT ENDED WITH ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF CERTAIN SIGNIFICANT AREAS OF ARAB TERRITORY. ONE WAS THE GOLAN HEIGHTS OF SYRIA. ANOTHER WAS THE PART OF PALESTINE LYING WEST OF THE JORDAN RIVER---AN AREA WHICH, ALTHOUGH INHABITED BY PALESTINIAN ARABS, HAD BEEN UNDER JORDANIAN CONTROL SINCE NINETEEN FORTY-EIGHT. BOTH THESE AREAS ARE STILL OCCUPIED BY ISRAEL. BOTH HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY SIGNIFICANT FACTORS IN THE SEARCH FOR A MIDDLE EAST PEACE SETTLEMENT. AND BOTH WERE BACK IN THE NEWS THIS WEEK.

THE GOLAN HEIGHTS WAS, OF COURSE, THE SUBJECT OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND SYRIA IN MAY OF NINETEEN SEVENTY-FOUR, WHEN ISRAEL WITHDREW SLIGHTLY AND A UNITED NATIONS BUFFER FORCE WAS INSERTED BETWEEN THE ARMIES OF THE TWO COUNTRIES. EVERY SIX MONTHS SINCE THEN, THE U.N. MANDATE HAS BEEN RENEWED---WITH THE CONSENT OF ISRAEL AND SYRIA. BUT SOMETIMES THE RENEWAL HAS NOT COME UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE; FOR EXAMPLE, LAST NOVEMBER, IT WAS RENEWED ONLY AFTER SYRIAN INSISTENCE THAT THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION BE INCLUDED IN A NEW UNITED NATIONS DEBATE ON THE MIDDLE EAST. THEREFORE, OBSERVERS WERE MILDLY ---AND PLEASANTLY --- SURPRISED ON THURSDAY WHEN SYRIA AGREED TO THE RENEWAL FOUR DAYS BEFORE THE MANDATE WAS DUE TO EXPIRE.

THE WEST BANK ALSO CAME INTO THE NEWS THIS WEEK VIA THE UNITED NATIONS. FOR SEVERAL DAYS THE SECURITY COUNCIL HAS BEEN DEBATING THE PROBLEM OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS ON THE WEST BANK. AND ON WEDNESDAY IT APPROVED A MAJORITY STATEMENT DEPLORING THE SETTLEMENTS AND OTHER ISRAELI ACTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AN UNUSUAL ASPECT OF THE DEBATE WAS A MARKED DIFFERENCE OF OPINIOI BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES. THE UNITED STATES HAD ABSTAINED FROM VOTING, ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE RESOLUTION WAS UNBALANCED. BUT AMBASSADOR WILLIAM SCRANTON TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO REITERATE AMERICAN OPPOSITION TO THE ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. HE WARNED THAT THE SETTLEMENTS ARE---IN HIS WORDS---"INCREASINGLY A MATTER OF CONCERN AND DISTRESS TO ITS FRIENDS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, AND ARE NOT HELPFUL TO THE PROCESS OF PEACE." THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR REJECTED THE VIEW, EXPRESSED BY THE MAJORITY, THAT THE SETTLEMENTS ARE AN OBSTACLE TO PEACE.

THE TWO OCCUPIED TERRITORIES INEVITABLY WILL APPEAR IN THE NEWS AGAIN. IT HAS BECOME OBVIOUS IN RECENT WEEKS THAT THE PALESTINIAN ARABS LIVING ON THE WEST BANK ARE INCREASINGLY RESTIVE ABOUT THE ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS---AND THEY ARE, IN FACT, A MAJOR ISSUE IN ISRAELI DOMESTIC POLITICS. AS FOR THE GOLAN HEIGHTS, ANOTHER SIX MONTHS WILL INEXORABLY RAISE ONCE AGAIN THE ISSUE OF THE U.N. MANDATE. BOTH SITUATIONS UNDERLINE THE NEED FOR NEW INITIATIVES TOWARD PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. FRENCH PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING CALLED FOR A NEW EFFORT LAST WEEK WHEN HE WAS IN WASHINGTON, WARNING THAT THE MERE PASSAGE OF TIME DOES NOT IMPROVE THE CHANCES FOR PEACE. SECRETARY KISSINGER ECHOED THE SAME THEME IN HIS SPEECH IN LONDON ON

WEDNESDAY. "THE TIME IS APPROACHING," HE SAID, "WHEN NEW IMPETUS MUST BE GIVEN TO MOVEMENT TOWARDS AN OVERALL PEACE." THE RENEWAL OF THE GOLAN HEIGHTS MANDATE ONCE MORE PROVIDES THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A NEW APPROACH TO NEGOTIATIONS. IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT THE OPPORTUNITY SHOULD NOT BE WASTED.

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